

BRANCHES



The Country Meets the City



The Mobile Dairy Classroom Visits CCES



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The purpose of our parental Christian School is to educate our children to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for a life of responsible stewardship in God's Kingdom.

From the Chairman....

Chris Hoff

Welcome to the April edition of *Branches*. Staff, the Board, committees and many volunteers have been quite busy over the past month or so. We have much to relate to you regarding program delivery, proposed changes to bylaws, a brief valley-wide view, and some miscellaneous news.

Volunteers

One of the benefits of serving on the Board is the bird's eye view, where we can see the labour of love by staff, committees and various volunteers. It goes without saying the volunteer work contributes in a special way to the positive culture in the school. The volunteers serve in the Library, classrooms and even the front office. Some are organizing the annual Golf Tournament; others are organizing the annual pancake breakfast/garage sale; and still others worked on a rare day off (Easter Friday) to install a long jump pit. I am sure I missed many as well. From the Board, representing the community - thank you to you all!

Program Delivery and Staffing

At present, CCES is expected to be in the range of 210 students next year. This is fairly consistent with this year, as well as forecasts moving forward into a five year horizon. Generally, when the student population exceeds 200 students or so, some of the classes exceed our guidelines for pupil-teacher ratio. At this point, there is always a tension between preferred program delivery, and the realities of tuition levels and best utilization of the building. Thankfully the Board can rely on the collective wisdom of teachers, administration and the Education Committee to advise on these difficult choices. To this end, the Board has decided to split Grade 5 and Grade 6 next year, and to deliver a Grade 1 class of 26 students. Thanks especially to teachers that are part of this process including Mary MacDougal (Grade 1) and Jerry Scholtens, who will move from Grade 4 to Grade 6. Other staffing assignments for next year are expected to remain the same as this year - with of course the addition of Diana Nobel as a replacement for Rachel Vanderhorst in Grade 7.

We also heartily welcome Sarah Hicks to the Educational Assistant staff. Sarah specialized in Special Education at MTI in Abbotsford, and has spent considerable time at CCES already for in-class

training and filling in. Welcome on a more permanent basis Sarah!

Proposed Changes to CCES Bylaws

In a previous edition of *Branches*, we mentioned that the Board plans to systematically review our bylaws and many of our policies this year. This is a useful exercise for the Board as many of us are fairly new. However, it is also useful as some policies - and well as some of our bylaws - are clearly outdated and do not reflect current best practices, or could use some refinement.

To that end, we propose to make some minor changes to our bylaws at the membership meeting planned for late May 2014. At this meeting we will walk through each of the proposed changes. In the meantime, you can find a 'track change' version of the proposed changes on the school website. The changes basically fall into the categories of:

- Clarity: such as regarding the family unit that comprises a member
- Consistency: such as regarding notice to membership for membership meeting agenda items
- Update: such as accounting practices
- Flexibility: such as giving the Board financial flexibility to respond to issues and spend up to \$25,000 that is not budgeted for without special approval from membership. This provision was borrowed from John Calvin Christian School in Yarrow. It may raise a few eyebrows, but in reality the current provision (which requires financial transactions not currently in the budget to be approved by membership) simply does not concord with the operating realities of the school/Board.

As noted, you can find the proposed changes to the bylaws on our website www.credoces.org. We encourage you to review them - if you have questions feel free to chat with a Board member or email myself (cphoff@telus.net) or Will VanOene (wgvanoene@gmail.com).

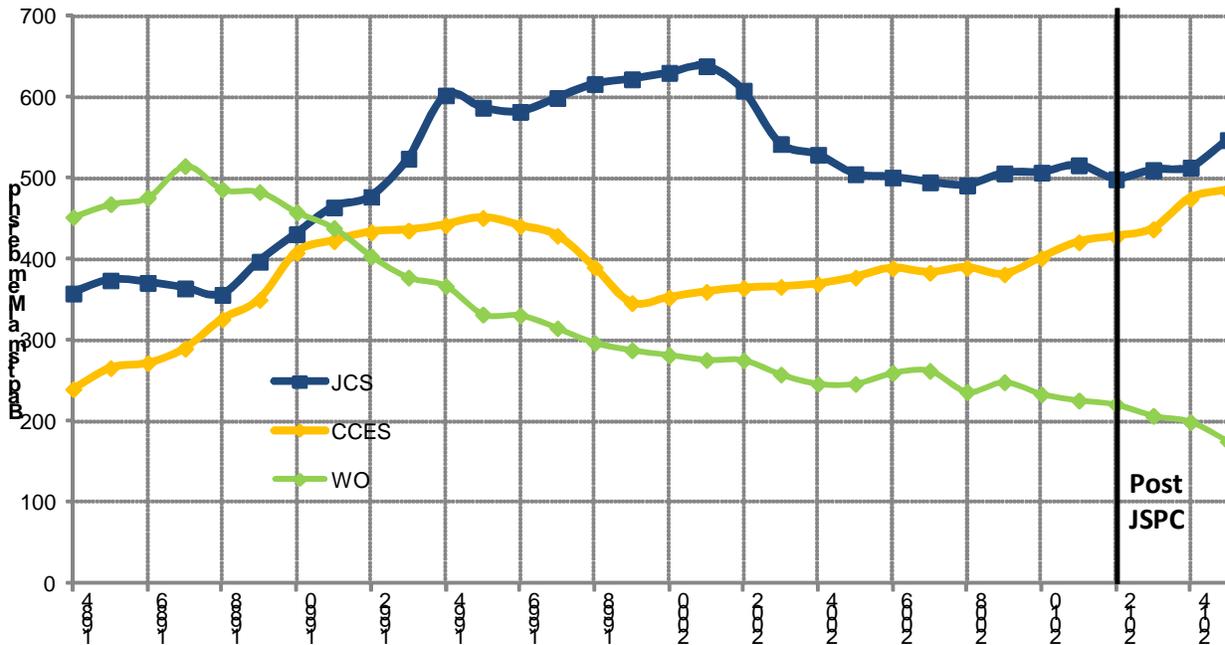
These amendments will be presented as one motion at the membership meeting. You will note that these changes do not make provisions for URC

membership. The Board has one final discussion of this planned for our May Board meeting, and we expect to have more information on this available to membership in early May.

Valleywide View

For those with an ear to the ground, you may be aware that the our sister elementary schools in the Fraser Valley are contemplating bringing plans for the future of their schools to their respective memberships in late May. As their plans are not yet public, there is little I can relate at this point.

However, I can relate that, during inter-board discussions, the CCES Board has been quite insistent that we should seek a collective forward-looking solution for the entire CanRC community in the valley - one that is mindful of the ongoing demographic trends that have been reaffirmed since the JSPC vision in 2012. These trends are represented in the chart below, which shows baptismal members (a rough proxy for student population) for the congregations that make up the normal catchment areas for the three schools (based upon the Federation yearbook).



Other General Miscellaneous News

- After a year off, the **Golf Tournament** is back (!), and planned for June 06 at Poppy Estates. We extend a special thanks to the organizing committee including James Stiksma, Stan Pol, Darren Leffers, Brian Meerstra and Neil Dykstra. Please register with one of these fine fellows, or by emailing ccesgolf2015@gmail.com. Funds raised will be dedicated to resurfacing the playgrounds.
- Thanks to Elma, Oliver and Tim for their work preparing for the **budget** for the 2015-2016 school year.
- The **Credo Christian High School Spring General Meeting** is planned for May 20, 2015. Elementary school members are also

- members of CCHS, and you are encouraged to attend.
- The CanRC schools in B.C. are presently exploring creation of a foundation similar to the **Harvest Foundation** in Ontario.

Over the last eight months God has blessed us with the financial resources, infrastructure and faithful staff that made it possible for us to sustain CCES - and to plan confidently for its future. We pray for His continued blessing as we close out the school year in May and June. We also wish the students all the best in their studies, with the hope that they can soon successfully complete another grade. To all of you we wish a blessed Sunday!

From the Principal....

Heres Snijder

From the rising of the sun to its setting,
the name of the LORD is to be praised!
Psalm 113:3, ESV
2014/15 year theme text for CCES

Sustaining an attitude of gratitude

This week we will, the Lord willing, enter the month of May - the second last month of the 2014-15 school year. We can already look back on eight months of institutionalized learning at Credo. Blessings upon blessings! More causes and reasons to be thankful as we list evidences of God's gracious care and provisions. So much He shares with us to share with others and with the next generation!

Congratulations to Mrs. Huttema!

Thursday, April 9 was a milestone day for Mrs. Deb Huttema, when she attended her final class of her final course in her Post Baccalaureate Degree in Special Education. CCES is blessed to have her as teacher and leader of the special education program, as she tirelessly advocates for students, coordinates, assesses, and monitors individual education plans, and interacts with classroom teachers, specialists and government protocols. Congratulations, Mrs. Huttema: may God continue to bless you and cause you to be a blessing to many!

Review of Parking lot use and traffic flow

A two-week trial period has confirmed that implementing minor changes in parking arrangements make a big difference in traffic flow and congestion. The Maintenance Committee will soon look into painting lines for parking stall and installing some 'official' signage to for handicap parking, crosswalk and fire lane.

Quad School Speech Contest

Friday, May 1st, will be another highlight of the school year! The much-anticipated quad school speech contest event will bring the semi-finalists from 4 elementary schools together in Aldergrove Canadian Reformed Church. This is a very worthwhile event for all Grade 6 and 7 students, as it provides so many skill-building opportunities, in selecting, practicing and delivering of many thoughts on a single topic. You are encouraged to come out and support the finalists: you will be inspired by their work - they will be encouraged by your presence!

Let speech be sound

Speech delivery receives much attention in upper elementary grades, *speaking well of each other* is discussed in all classrooms. An increased awareness of the sins of gossip, talking behind classmates' backs, put downs, etc., contributes to the positive school culture and climate we so hold dear. The importance of this is shared with and by many parents and is noted with gratitude.

School grounds upgrades continue!

We thank the maintenance for the nice upgrades to the school grounds: the bicycle parking area, a second sand box, and new long jump pit are fine additions to the school property.

Choir and Music evening.

Mrs. Winkelaar's choristers are excited to share some fine repertoire with you on May 11, starting at 7:00 pm. Grades 4, 5 and 7 students will briefly join them and feature some musical selections played on recorder, ukulele and band instruments. You are cordially invited!

Program review and delivery

The review of the **French** and **Math** curriculums is almost complete. The Education Committee is assessing the **physical education** curriculum, along with the functioning of **intramural sports** events and the rationale for running after school clubs. This assessment is planned to be complete by June of this school year.

A massive **Bible Curriculum** writing project has been completed. Canadian Reformed teachers in Ontario have worked on this project since 2006. This is purchased by the school, and will be topic of staff professional development meetings. The document articulates **Aims for teaching Bible** as follows (p. 9):

"The overall goal for Bible Study in the school's curriculum is a telling of the great and mighty deeds of the LORD to the students. The overarching knowledge component leads to general aims of Bible Study in the Reformed school. These aims acknowledge that the children are called to a response of gratitude for God's work of salvation through Jesus Christ, and therefore emphasize the affective domain. They are written in terms of what the teacher does, as it is difficult to gauge the progress the Holy Spirit has made in the students.

The aims can be summarized as follows:

1. To tell the students what the Triune God has done and does for and with His people in the facts and events recorded in Scripture, so they may know, love, revere, and worship His Name, and be comforted and warned. (Heb 12:1-3)
2. To instill in the students a deep reverence and respect for the awesomeness, holiness, and majesty of God.
3. To foster in the students a deep appreciation for the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12)
4. To instill in the students the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in granting faith and the fruit of the Spirit.
5. To equip the students with the armour of God so that they may be able to stand firm. (Eph 6).
6. To equip the students with skills of understanding and interpreting the Scripture.
7. To teach the students how to use various resources to aid in Bible study.
8. To encourage the students to rejoice in their salvation and eagerly await the coming of God's new heaven and earth. (John 15:9-12)
9. To instill in the students respect for the Bible as God's complete and infallible Word. (BC Art 7)
10. To develop in the students an appreciation of the significance of their baptism as a sign of the covenant. (Form for Baptism)
11. To instill in the students an understanding that

God calls them to service and to be a light in the world.

Librarians

Recently, Credo's hardworking librarians attended a United Library Services Book sale, and came back with a large number of new additions. These new books need to be read and reviewed. If you love reading, please consider helping out by evaluating the content of these new books before they are placed in the library collection. Please connect with Sita VanderPol or Joyce Meerstra and thank you very much!

10,000 reasons - and more!

We are looking forward to the months of May and June, eager to discover what God has in store for us at school, home, church and society.

...The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning
 It's time to sing Your song again
 Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me
 Let me be singing when the evening comes

You're rich in love, and You're slow to anger
 Your name is great, and Your heart is kind
 For all Your goodness I will keep on singing
 Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find
 Matt Redman

Short Reports of Board Meetings

Short Report of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of Credo Christian Elementary School February 10, 2015

- **Opening and Welcome:** The Chairman, Chris Hoff, opened the meeting by reading from Psalm 78 and prayer. He welcomed all the Directors and Principal Heres Snijder to the meeting.
- **Agenda Approval:** The agenda for the regular board meeting was approved.
- **Minutes and Short Report:** The Minutes and Short Report of the January 13th, 2015 Board meeting were adopted.
- **Incoming/Outgoing Correspondence:** One incoming letter was received from a staff member.
- **Principal's Report:** Heres Snijder presented the Principal's Report for February 2015 and

highlighted activities related to special education, curriculum development planning, and the recent combined teacher's conference. Planning is underway for the upcoming student led conferences.

- **Chairman's Report:** The Chairman's report for February 2015 was received for information. Chris Hoff reported on his activities as chairman.
- **General Business:** A number of matters were discussed including a status update from the Principal Recruit Committee, proposed mandate for a joint planning committee with JCS, WO and CCHS, staffing requirements for the 2015/16 school year, and planning for the annual board/staff visits. Some General Administration policies were reviewed.
- **Finance Committee:** The income statement for January 31, 2015 was submitted and reviewed. Recommendation from the Salary Committee presented at the combined boards meeting was

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- formally approved.
- **Education Committee:** The minutes of a recent Education Committee meeting were received for information. A proposal for an Athletic Director position is being considered.
- **Development Committee:** Neil Dykstra reported on the activities of the Development Committee. New promotional materials were further reviewed and discussed.
- **Maintenance:** The minutes of a recent Maintenance Committee meeting were received for information. Al Leyenhorst reported on the

activities of the Maintenance Committee. A proposed budget for maintenance items was passed on to the Finance Committee for possible inclusion in next year's budget.

- **Next Meetings / Events:** The next regular Board meeting is planned for March 10, 2015. An Ad-hoc meeting is planned for February 16 2015.
- **Closing:** Al Leyenhorst closed with thanksgiving prayer. Chris Hoff adjourned the meeting and thanked all for coming.

Short Report of an Ad-Hoc Meeting of the Board of Directors of Credo Christian Elementary School February 16, 2015

- **Opening and Welcome:** The Chairman, Chris Hoff, opened the meeting by reading from James 4 and prayer. He welcomed all the Directors to the meeting.
- **Agenda Approval:** The agenda for this specific meeting, primarily regarding Principal Recruit and program delivery for the 2015 school year, was approved.
- **Principal Recruit:** A report from the Principal Recruit Committee, submitted in advance of the meeting, was reviewed. After deliberation, the Board agreed to extend an offer of employment to Otto Bouwman.

- **Program Delivery for 2015:** The Board was updated on the current status of program delivery and staffing for the school year beginning in 2015.

- **By-law Review:** A review of the CCES bylaws was completed, with recommendations for suggested changes. A legal review of suggested changes will be sought before presentation to membership in May 2015.

- **Next Meetings / Events:** The next regular Board meeting is planned for March 10, 2015.

- **Closing:** Bob Huttema closed with thanksgiving prayer. Chris Hoff adjourned the meeting and thanked all for coming.

Short Report of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of Credo Christian Elementary School March 10, 2015

1. **Opening and Welcome:** The Chairman, Chris Hoff, opened the meeting by reading from Colossians 3 and prayer. He welcomed all the Directors and Principal Heres Snijder to the meeting.
2. **Agenda Approval:** The agenda for the regular board meeting was approved.
3. **Minutes and Short Report:** The Minutes and Short Report of the February 10th, 2015 Board meeting were adopted. The Minutes and Short Report of the February 16th, 2015 Ad-hoc Board meeting were adopted.
4. **Incoming/Outgoing Correspondence:** One incoming letter was received regarding enrolment. Out outgoing letter was sent to the CCRTC.
5. **Principal's Report:** Heres Snijder presented

the Principal's Report for March 2015 and highlighted activities related to student led conferences, lock-down drills, and principal transition. The draft school calendar for 2015/16 and a memory work best practices guide were presented. Upon recommendation from the interview committee, a motion to extend an offer of employment to an SEA was approved.

6. **Chairman's Report:** The Chairman's report for March 2015 was received for information. Chris Hoff reported on his activities as chairman.

7. **General Business:** A number of matters were discussed including parking lot revisions and golf tournament planning, and reports were received from the recent Board/Staff visits. It was noted with thankfulness that Otto Bouwman accepted the offer for principal, and that the Grade 7 teaching vacancy could also be filled. John Roukema has also accepted his appointment as governor to the CCSTA.

- Minutes of the ad-hoc combined schools foundation committee were received for information. Some General Administration and Personnel policies were also reviewed.
8. **Finance Committee:** The income statement for February 28, 2015 was submitted and reviewed. Oliver Hansma reported on the activities of the Finance Committee.
 9. **Education Committee:** The minutes of two recent Education Committee meetings were received for information. Bob Huttema reported on the activities of the Education Committee.
 10. **Development Committee:** The minutes of a recent Development Committee meeting were received for information. Neil Dykstra reported on the activities of the Development Committee. A mock-up of promotional materials were reviewed and discussed.
 11. **Special Education Committee:** The minutes of a recent Special Education Committee meeting were received for information. Fiona Jansen reported on the activities of the Special Education Committee.
 12. **IT Committee:** The minutes of a recent IT Committee meeting were received for information. Tim Rook reported on the activities of the IT Committee. Back-ups of the school's servers are currently being stored off-site.
 13. **Next Meetings / Events:** The next regular Board meeting is planned for April 7, 2015.
 14. **Closing:** Bob Huttema closed with thanksgiving prayer. Chris Hoff adjourned the meeting and thanked all for coming.

2015 CCES GOLF TOURNAMENT

We are excited to inform you that this year's tournament is fast approaching
This year we will be at a new location

POPPY ESTATES GOLF COURSE

Shotgun start at 8am
June 6, 2015

Entrance Fees
Adult \$125 Student/Senior \$85

There will be prizes and lunch provided after golf
This year we are raising funds to resurface the playgrounds

To book your foursome or even if you want to come by yourself
please email ccesgolf2015@gmail.com
or reach out to one of our organizing committee members

All golfers booked and paid in full by end of day May 9 will be eligible for our early bird draw
1 night stay for 2 in Harrison Hot Springs

Your organizing committee: James Stiksma, Stan Pol, Darren Leffers, or Brian Meerstra

Back to the Basics of Free Play

Natasja VanRhee

What are your children busy with outside of the school hours? The beautiful weather has arrived, creating plenty of opportunities for outside playtime. Children have opportunities to play in the school setting, during their recess and lunch breaks. But, children need to have more time and opportunities to engage in unstructured play. As a teacher at Credo, I have seen the value that unstructured playtime offers children. This free play time allows students to be creative, joyful and active. As a teacher, and as a parent, I wonder about the carry-over of this in the home setting? How much opportunity are children given to play outside, actively and creatively, so that they can reap the benefits of this type of play?

It is important to start off by looking at how God wants us to view this kind of active play in our Christian community. Does He value this for His children? We have been blessed with active bodies, and with that gift, comes the responsibility, to appreciate and take care of our bodies and our minds. This is an integral part of serving God. In our Christian community, we are familiar with the text: *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6: 19-20 ESV).* Paul was talking about how our bodies belong to God, and that as Christians, the Holy Spirit fills us and lives in us.

We want children to understand that part of fulfilling God's plan for us, is taking care of developing our bodies, as well as our minds. Physical activity, whether it be structured or unstructured, provides opportunities for children to show responsible action. Some objectives for my students and my children, are to develop an understanding of God's call to them to value and care for their bodies, so that they can better serve God. In addition, students will have opportunities to participate daily, in a variety of physical activities, inside and outside of the classroom. Together, this aids in the development of skills and attitudes that enable children to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

So, if it is our responsibility to value and take care of our bodies, what does that require of us? At school, there are many opportunities to develop the physical aspect of the body. Part of the P.E. program involves

doing physical activities such as: creative movement, muscular fitness, physical endurance and structured play in individual, dual and team activities. This is easily done in the classroom under structured guidance in P.E. classes and during D.P.A. (Daily Physical Activity). This happens daily because of the time set aside for this kind of activity. However, outside of the school hours, how is this being achieved by parents and children? It is very challenging to ensure that physical activity is happening due to our rainy climate, the invasions of screens in the home, and because our fast-paced, busy lives.

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:20 ESV).

If you are reading this you can probably relate to the days of care free play; afternoons and evenings spent hanging out on the street, playing street hockey, kick the can, or hopscotch for hours on end. Those days are long gone; times have changed with the streets and parks

being silent. There's a noticeable absence of children playing in their yards or in the neighbourhood, till being called in for dinner.

There are many ways that this type of an activity-driven attitude and approach to life can be developed. I do this as part of my curriculum in P.E., but I am also writing this in order to promote this kind of active physical development outside of the classroom. I would challenge parents and community members to encourage child's play, which is a way of freestyle play in an unstructured environment. A few months ago, I read a book that provided a practical approach to encouraging activity and unstructured play in our local communities. The book, "Child's Play" by Silken Laumann, focused on getting back to the basics of what play used to be like, free from the invasion of the screens, and the over-structured calendars.

So as the longer days of spring are here, is it possible to regain that kind of free-play? Can families rediscover the joy that children experience when they have the opportunities to play outdoors with freedom and without any care? What is important are the small moments, simple actions and easy games that fill our souls. They delight our senses and sustain us as we have time to be physically active.

Along with the joy that children discover with this kind of care free play, is the development of social skills in

a non-stressful environment. Often the play is low-stress, as a result of limited rules and minimal social demands on the children. This allows children to unwind, to rejuvenate and to learn how to interact with each other. The nature of free play allows children to engage at their own pace, as opposed to rule driven activities. Games and electronics have their own set-pace that children are competing with. Free play allows children to self-direct the pace at which they are playing.

If we want this to happen for our children within our community, we may have to take the initiative and create the opportunities. We have done this in this our schools by being intentional about our nutrition and D.P.A breaks. How is this done during the hours after school? This can be done by getting into some simple routines as families. A few ideas are: evening walks around the neighborhood, shooting some hoops, playing a game of ball hockey, or by creating a chalk-a-block on the sidewalk or road. These are simple activities that fill our souls with joy and laughter.

Another huge benefit of getting outside and playing in the neighborhood, is the opportunity to meet and play with members of the neighborhood. Free play allows for casual moments to catch up with neighbors. This can lead to opportunities to make connections with neighbours so that we can create relationships that allow us to comfortably invite them to attend a VBS or Coffee Break program. The benefits of this unstructured

What is important are the small moments, simple actions and easy games that fill our souls

playtime so much outweighs the possible inconveniences of an overscheduled, stressful life.

In collaboration with my students and my children at home, we came up with a list of activities that help to develop the free, unstructured play environment. These are games that can be played at school, on the road, in a backyard, a park, or whatever space is available for use. This is a list of some of the children's favorites:

- Ball Hockey
- Hiding Games: Capture the flag, Hide and Go Seek, Camouflage, Kick the Can
- Chalk Games: Four Square, Hopscotch, Body tracing, Hangman
- Basketball Hoop Games: Bump and 21
- Trampoline Games: Crack the Egg, Bum-wars, and Dead-Man

So why not get outside this weekend and encourage your children to kick around a soccer ball, draw with sidewalk chalk, or plan a picnic. Playing is not only good for the body, but for the soul, allowing us to recapture a bit of our youth as well. Who doesn't feel young again while playing some "Bump" or "21" with the kids? ;)

Reference
Laumann, Silken, (2007) *Child's Play*, Vintage Canada

Credo Aid Update....

Credo Aid is excited to announce this year's Mother's Day FAIR! Formerly known as the Pancake Breakfast, this event will include everything from previous years plus MORE!! Bouncy castle, dunk tank, carnival games, photo booth, contests, car wash, garage sale, and many other surprises...it'll all be there!!

This is the major Credo Aid fundraising event of the year so please join us for a fabulous day of fun on Saturday, May 9, from 8am - 12pm. We promise it to be a spectacular community event with entertainment for every age!

In order to pull off this exciting event, we do need your involvement! From kitchen help, bakers, crafters, vendor and booth operators - there is sure to be a

position just right for you, and we've now made it easy for you to sign up. A complete volunteer schedule can be found at (<http://vols.pt/88fJe4>). No log in is necessary. Simply scroll through the available volunteer positions, select a shift/task (or two!) that works for you and sign up. Your help is so appreciated - thankyou!

Contact credofair@gmail.com or call one of the Event Coordinators below if you have any questions.

Petra Bontkes - (778) 278.3520
Evelynn Scheper - (604) 857.1347

Loyola Supreme Court Decision: Parental rights and religious freedom upheld

Dear ARPA friends and supporters,

After 12 months of deliberation, the Supreme Court of Canada released its decision this morning in *Loyola High School v. Quebec (Attorney General)*, upholding religious freedom first for the Loyola Jesuit school but also more broadly for all who seek to apply their faith to the education of their children. This is a case that every independent Christian school across the country has been watching closely.

At stake in this case was the religious freedom of parents and institutions to educate children according to a worldview that might be different than that of the State education bureaucracy. Thankfully, the Court was unanimous in finding that religious communities can teach their own faith to their children from their own perspective.

As you may remember, ARPA Canada led a coalition of 313 independent Christian schools and 11 post-secondary institutions to intervene in the case. The coalition was called the Association of Christian Educators and Schools (ACES) and we argued that confessional schools must be accommodated as an alternative to State-run schools.

André Schutten, Legal Counsel for ARPA Canada, was in the counsel lock-down this morning and had opportunity to review the decision before it was made public. He noted the following in a press release to the media: “Our hope was that the Supreme Court would affirm hundreds of years of legal precedent that parents are the first decision-makers for their children, and that religious freedom includes the right to train children within a particular worldview. This morning, the Supreme Court has delivered.” He also said, “With this decision, the Court stood up for liberty and for parental rights. While the Court could have been stronger in some places, this is still a welcome decision.”

In light of this case, ARPA Canada will be encouraging our elected leaders in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta to rethink their one-size-fits-all approach to religion, ethics and secularism. Over the past two years, these provinces have imposed a particular religious – that is, secular – worldview on all schools through Bill 13 (Ontario, 2013), Bill 18 (Manitoba, 2014) and Bill 10 (Alberta, 2015), while ignoring or suppressing the freedom of religious institutions and families.

Parents ought to have the first and final say on the religious and moral instruction of their children. While the State may assist parents in educating children, they may not override parental decisions relating to ethical and religious instruction. There has been a trend towards Statism in education in Canada. This decision gives hope to parents in stopping that slide.

However, there are problems with the decision as well. For example, the majority found “no significant impairment of freedom of religion in requiring Loyola to offer a course that explains the beliefs, ethics and practices of other religions in as objective and neutral a way as possible, rather than from the Catholic perspective.” (para. 6). If this means that Christian schools should teach the factual elements of other religions (e.g. the 5 pillars of Islam, the 8-fold path of Buddhism, etc.), then those facts can be taught relatively objectively (and all the Christian schools I know do that anyway). However, it remains unclear whether and how much those ethics and beliefs of other religions can then be critically evaluated through a Christian worldview. Further, a deeper issue is the Court’s assumption that the State has the authority to tell schools and parents what must be taught.

Despite the shortcomings of the judgement, we should still see this as a win. The court states, “A secular state does not – and cannot – interfere with the beliefs and practices of a religious group unless they conflict with or harm overriding public interests... A secular state respects religious differences, it does not seek to extinguish them.” (para. 43) For now, this is a fine statement. However, “respecting religious differences” is susceptible to changing “public interests”.

The crux of the decision is found in paragraph 62, where the Court ruled, “To tell a Catholic school how to explain its faith undermines the liberty of the members of its community who have chosen to give effect to the collective dimension of their religious beliefs by participating in a denominational school.” This is a robust defence of independent Christian schools. The court goes further in paragraphs 63 to 67, outlining how the actions of the Quebec Minister of Education “interferes with the rights of parents to transmit the Catholic faith to their children... because it prevents a Catholic discussion of Catholicism. This ignores the fact that an essential ingredient of the vitality of a religious community is the ability of its members to pass on their beliefs to their children, whether through instruction in the home or participation in communal institutions.” (para. 64).

Finally, when reading the decision, paragraph 70 seems to come across very strongly in our favour: “Catholic doctrine and Catholic ethics are simply too intertwined to make it possible to teach one from a religious perspective and the other neutrally.” It seemed the Court understood the nature of religious education: the worldview is holistic and informs all aspects of education. But, curiously, the Court steps way back from that in the very next paragraph by stating that “requiring Loyola to teach about the ethics of *other* religions in a neutral, historical and phenomenological way would not interfere disproportionately with the relevant Charter protections implicated by the decision.”

The Court appears to believe that simply teaching the objective facts about various religions is required, which (as discussed above) most Christian schools do anyway. When it comes to ethics and religion and morality however, it seems open still to Christian schools to then evaluate those religious worldviews from our own perspective.

Again, this ruling can be celebrated as a win. The court sets out a clear defense of communal religious rights, makes good references to parental rights and in the end ruled for religious liberty. While we would have loved a much stronger and broader decision, considering the legal context and cultural climate we find ourselves, this case is a step in the right direction.

On behalf of the entire ARPA team, we give thanks first to our providential Father who has blessed the work we have all done together and surrounded us with such a supportive community. We are so thankful for the ongoing encouragement of the Christian community for the work we are privileged to do. And we say a special thank you to Ian Moes, lawyer in British Columbia, for his exceptional help on this particular case.

To read the Loyola decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, [click here](#). To read the ACES factum (written legal arguments), [click here](#). For a background on the Loyola case, [click here](#).

André Schutten, Legal Counsel
and the entire ARPA team

BROUGHT TO YOU BY CREDO AID

THE MOTHER'S DAY

FAIR

SATURDAY MAY 9TH

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

CREDO CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

LOTS OF GAMES

GARAGE SALE

DUNK
TANK

CAR WASH

TOT
ZONE

CRAFT TABLE

PANCAKE EATING
CONTEST

PIE BAKING CONTEST | VENDORS

COLORING CONTEST

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

GRILLS GO UNTIL 11:00

MORE GAMES MORE FOOD
MORE FAMILY FUN

CONTACT US AT: CREDOFAIR@GMAIL.COM